

67. *Stone on Birds from Colombia.*

[On a Collection of Birds from the Vicinity of Bogotá, with a Review of the South-American Species of *Speotyto* and *Troglodytes*. By Witmer Stone. Proc. Ac. Nat. Sci. Philad. 1899, p. 302.]

The Academy of Natural Sciences has come into possession of a valuable collection of birds, made near Bogotá and on the surrounding ranges by the late Dr. J. W. Detwiller, with localities attached to the specimens. Mr. Stone now catalogues them, and reviews the S. American species of *Speotyto* and *Troglodytes*. Of the former genus he separates, as a new subspecies, *S. cunicularia tolimæ*; and of the latter he describes, as a new species, *Troglodytes columbæ*.

68. *Witherby on the Birds of South-western Spain.*

[Two Months on the Guadalquivir. By Harry F. Witherby, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. Reprinted from 'Knowledge,' 1899.]

This is a pleasantly written description of a visit to ground which is already familiar to readers of this Journal; in fact there is now a sort of dragoman who provides boats, lodging, and all accessories for "trippers" to a district which was once "wild" Spain. This was an agreeable "outing"; but we are glad to find that Mr. Witherby has more serious ambitions, and that he has started for Khartoum and the country beyond on the White Nile, accompanied by two experienced collectors.

XXI.—*Letters, Extracts, Notices, &c.*

WE have received the following letters, addressed "to the Editors of 'The Ibis'":—

SIRS,—The January number of 'The Ibis' for the present year contains figures of two birds, recently described by Mr. Weld-Blundell and Lord Lovat in the Bull. B. O. C. vol. x. pp. xix, xx. I think I can easily show that neither of these birds can stand as a new species.

The first bird figured is *Oriolus meneliki* W.-B. & L.,

Bull. B. O. C. vol. x. p. xix (1899); Ogilvie Grant, Ibis, 1900, p. 122, pl. ii.

Mr. Ogilvie Grant says:—"This fine species closely resembles *O. monachus* Gm., but may at once be distinguished by the colour of the bill, which is *uniform deep black*. The greater *secondary wing-coverts* and *some of the lesser wing-coverts* are, moreover, clearly *edged with golden yellow*, whereas in *O. monachus* they are always uniform, and *the subterminal markings on the third, fourth, and fifth tail-feathers extend over both webs and are of a deep black*."

Among the birds collected by Antinori in Shoa there were 21 specimens which I have attributed to *Oriolus monachus* (Ann. Mus. Civ. Gen. (2) i. p. 203). Two of them (*s, t*) are exactly like the figure of *O. meneliki*, having the bill extremely black; a third (*r*) has the bill partly black and partly mahogany-red. The first two have been identified by me as young birds: in fact they have the black feathers of the throat slightly edged with pale yellowish; also the third specimen (*r*) has traces of a yellowish tinge on the chin, and this I take to be immature. If I am not mistaken, some traces of whitish edging to the feathers of the chin appear also in the figure of the type specimen of *O. meneliki*. It is important to notice that on the labels written by Antinori, the bills of the two young birds and of the immature one are marked as reddish, so that the change of colour of the bill from reddish to black evidently depends on the drying of the skin.

As to the other characters assigned to *O. meneliki*, the yellow edge of the greater secondary wing-coverts is also a sign of immaturity; and as to the black subterminal markings on the third, fourth, and fifth tail-feathers extending over both webs and forming a subterminal black band, I have noticed in our series that this band is almost obsolete in the very young birds, and becomes more prominent as the birds become older. From all this I have not the least doubt that the bird described and figured in 'The Ibis' is an immature specimen of *O. monachus*. It appears, also, that in the allied species the bill while drying becomes entirely black;

at least a young bird of *Oriolus larvatus* in the Turin Museum has the bill uniformly black.

Moreover Finsch and Hartlaub, in their work 'Die Vögel Ost-Afrikas,' describe the bill of the young *O. larvatus* and *O. monachus* (pp. 293, 294) as *black* (in the dry skin).

As to *Sporæginthus margarite* Weld-Blundeil and Lovat, Bull. B. O. C. vol. x. p. xx (1899) ; Ogilvie Grant, Ibis, 1900, p. 130, pl. iii. fig. 1, it agrees very well with the types of my *Estrilda ochrogaster* from Abyssinia (Boll. Mus. Tor. no. 287, p. 4, 1897). On comparing my birds with the figure, the only difference seems to be in the greater brightness of the ochreous colour of the underparts shown in the plate, which is probably due to the colorist.

Yours &c.,

Turin Zool. Mus.

T. SALVADORI.

January 1900.

---

SIRS,—Having received a living specimen of the rare Ross's Snow-Goose (*Chen rossi*) of Arctic America (which is quite different from *C. hyperboreus* and its allies), I have compared the descriptions given of the soft parts of this bird in the Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum (xxvi. p. 88), and elsewhere, with my specimen. These descriptions are not accurate, having been, no doubt, taken from dry skins, and I think it may be of interest to state the particulars correctly, which are as follows:—

Bill comparatively a little shorter than in *Chen hyperboreus*. The commissure opens nearly, if perhaps not quite so much, as in *Chen hyperboreus*, and encloses a distinctly black space, as in the larger species; this black is most intense in the upper mandible and in the upper inner part of the lower mandible. In the swollen outside surface of the lower mandible the black ends in vertical lines, with bluish flesh-coloured divisions between them. Between the vertical line formed by the end of the feathering on the sides of the upper mandible and the nostrils extends an olive-greenish-grey space, in which the skin is marked with more or less horizontal thickish wrinkles. On the basal *frontal* part of the upper

mandible the olive-green extends about half as far as on the sides, and is smoother. It has the form of a triangle, with its base against the head. In front of this triangle is a light-orange space. The nail of the bill is whitish flesh-colour. The rest of the bill is bright flesh-colour.

It is worthy of note that the above-described olive-greenish-grey base of the bill looks *bluish* grey in the distance, so that, if not examined closely, the bill gives one the impression of being flesh-coloured, with a bluish-grey base. I was therefore much surprised, when I took the bird up in my hands, to find that the base of the bill is olive-greenish-grey.

The iris is dark brown. The legs and feet are flesh-colour.

So far as I can judge from the voice, my bird is a female.

Yours &c.,

F. E. BLAAUW.

Gooilust, s'Graveland, North Holland.

February 1900.

---

*Destruction of Grebes in California.*—In 'Science' (n. s. xi. p. 188) we are told "where the Grebe-skins come from," and how the birds are killed by thousands among their nests on the lakes of Eastern Oregon and California. Three species—the Western, the Eared, and the Pied-billed Grebes—are found breeding in the shallow waters of Tula Lake, California, and there the hunters are engaged during the breeding-season in shooting the old birds, stripping the skins from their breasts, and shipping them to San Francisco. From 20 to 50 cents are received for each skin, and a hunter makes from 20 to 30 dollars a day. At the present rate of destruction the birds will not last many years.

---

*Ornithophilous Plants.*—In the 'American Naturalist' for December last (vol. xxxiii. p. 953), Mr. R. C. McGregor shows that cross-fertilization in a garden shrub of the genus *Salvia* (*S. coccinea*) is effected by the bill of a Humming-bird (*Calypte annæ*), which resorts to its flowers to obtain nectar. Dr. W. Trelease had previously described a similar

fertilization of *Salvia splendens* by the Ruby-throated Hummer, *Trochilus colubris*. Mr. McGregor does not state where he made his observations, but *Calypte annæ* is a well-known Californian species.

---

*Dr. Radde's List of Travels and Publications.*—With a copy of the 'Museum Caucasicum' (noticed above, p. 392), Dr. Radde kindly sends us a useful summary of his travels and expeditions, as well as a list of his chief publications, 36 in number, besides numerous minor articles. These serve to show at a glance the large amount of good work this veteran zoologist has accomplished since he commenced his investigations on the natural history of Southern Russia in 1854. For the past 35 years the Director of the Caucasian Museum has devoted his entire attention to the country in which he resides, and no fewer than 24 of the publications relate to his numerous expeditions in various parts of the Caucasus and the results consequent thereon.

---

*The Ornithological Outlook at Lake Kivu.*—The last number of Daenekelman's 'Mittheilungen von Forschungs-Reisenden und Gelehrten aus den Deutschen Schutzgebieten' (vol. xii. p. 235) contains a letter (dated August 12th, 1899) from Dr. R. Kandt announcing that he had established himself in a "Zoological Station" at Bergfrieden, on the south side of Lake Kivu, and had been devoting himself mainly to ornithological work. We fear, therefore, that disappointment may be in store for our friends Messrs. Mathews and Berridge, who are with Mr. Moore's Tanganyika Expedition, and who hoped to pass through an unexplored country between the north end of Lake Tanganyika and Lake Albert Edward. At the same time, whatever birds they may bring from that far-distant spot will be certainly new to us in England. At the date of the last letter (Nov. 7th, 1899) received from the Expedition, the party were still on Lake Tanganyika, where they had arrived on Sept. 20th, and were all in good health, except Mr. Berridge's servant, who had been invalided home. Messrs. Berridge and Mathews were at Sumba, shooting and collecting.

---

*Sir William Garstin's Expedition to the White Nile.*—Mr. Stanley S. Flower, Director of the Zoological Gardens at Ghizeh, left Cairo on the 3rd March last on an Expedition sent up the White Nile, by Lord Cromer, to make scientific observations of all sorts, under the leadership of Sir William Garstin. There can be no doubt that this energetic young naturalist, who fully inherits his late father's tastes, will make excellent use of his opportunities. We hope that Mr. Flower will not forget the birds.

*Canon Tristram's Golden Wedding.*—We are sure that members of the B. O. U. and other friends of ornithology will join us in offering congratulations to Canon and Mrs. Tristram on the occasion of their golden wedding, which was celebrated at Durham on the 5th of February last. So far as we know this is an unique event among the brethren of our Union.

## XXII.—Obituary.

MR. THOMAS J. MONK, who died at his residence, St. Anne's, Lewes, on 22nd December last, in his 70th year, was a very fine specimen of the sportsman-naturalist. His collection of Sussex-taken birds was celebrated, and contained some remarkably rare wanderers to Great Britain, such as the (first) Black-throated Thrush, the Red-throated Pipit, the (first) Black-headed Bunting and Rustic Bunting, the (only) Little Bunting, the (first) Scarlet Grosbeak, and the (only) White-winged Lark. Several of these were taken alive by bird-catchers in the vicinity of Brighton and transferred to Mr. Monk's large aviary, an establishment in which he took great pride, and where he attained a large amount of success in breeding and crossing. A good shot and rider, a genial companion, with a fund of racing and racy reminiscences, his loss will be very much felt by those who knew him, both in and beyond Sussex.

Ornithology has sustained a severe loss by the death on